



Addendum to the Habitats
Regulations Assessment of the
South Tyneside Publication Draft
Local Plan (2023-2040)– Main
Modifications

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FOOTPRINT ECOLOGY

Footprint Ecology is a small, employee-owned, ecological consultancy with an ethical focus. Founded in 2004 and based in Purbeck, Dorset we are catalysts for change, collaborating with organisations that share our commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. We create practical solutions to complex ecological challenges across a diverse portfolio including nature conservation, outdoor recreation and associated strategic planning.

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Summary

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) require local authorities to assess the impact of their Local Plan on the internationally important sites for biodiversity in and around their administrative areas. The task is achieved by means of a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

This is an addendum to the submission HRA of the South Tyneside Local Plan and has been produced to accompany the Main Modifications (MM). These MM have been produced following the local plan examination. This addendum should be read alongside the submission HRA (and also a different addendum produced to provide additional background and evidence of water quality issues). This addendum relates solely to the MM and considers the conclusions made in the previous HRA work and updates the findings to incorporate the MM. This addendum should be read in conjunction with the submission HRA.

The HRA at submission included an appropriate assessment and integrity test according to the statutory provisions laid out in the Habitats Regulations 2017 as amended. The HRA concluded that the Plan was in conformity with the Habitats Regulations, and at a plan level a conclusion of no adverse effects, alone or in-combination, on European site integrity could be drawn.

The MM include 54 different modifications with 105 changes, all of which have been comprehensively checked. These changes include a new policy (SP7a) relating to a strategic allocation for 400 homes, the deletion of some allocations, changes to the number of houses delivered by the plan and some slight boundary changes to certain sites.

The new allocation (SP7a) previously formed part of policy SP7 while the modifications now mean it is separate and a standalone policy. As a result of the modifications there is therefore an extra allocation that is screened in for likely significant effects as a result of the modifications. There is, however, no change to the appropriate assessment conclusions as the allocation itself was taken to appropriate assessment and fully assessed at submission. All the other changes have no implications on the screening or appropriate assessment findings that were undertaken as part of the submission HRA.

As such there is nothing to undermine the findings of the previous HRA. A conclusion of no adverse effects, alone or in-combination, on the integrity of any European sites can be drawn. The South Tyneside Local Plan (incorporating the MM) has therefore been subjected to an appropriate assessment and integrity test according to the statutory provisions laid out in the Habitats Regulations 2017 as amended. The HRA can conclude that the South Tyneside Local Plan is in conformity with the Habitats Regulations, and at a plan level a conclusion of no adverse effects, alone or in-combination, on European site integrity can be drawn.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is an addendum to the 2023 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the South Tyneside Local Plan and has been produced to accompany the Main Modifications (MM) prepared following the examination hearings into the Plan.

Background to the MM and this addendum

- 1.2 The South Tyneside Local Plan ('The Plan') sets out a strategy for the future development of South Tyneside Borough until 2040. The Plan includes strategic and detailed planning and development management policies, land allocations for housing, employment and mixed use.
- 1.3 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) require local authorities to assess the impact of their local plan on the internationally important sites for biodiversity in and around their administrative areas. The task is achieved by means of an HRA. The South Tyneside Local Plan has been subject to an HRA at each stage of the Plan.
- 1.4 A complete HRA was undertaken to accompany the submission version of the Plan, and these were subject to consultation in early 2024¹.
- 1.5 Before a local plan can be formally adopted and brought into use, it must be subject to an independent examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The purpose of the examination is to assess whether the plan is 'sound'. The Plan was submitted for examination by the Secretary of State in March 2025.
- 1.6 Following the initial hearings and discussion around water quality issues, an HRA addendum was produced². In light of the hearing discussions, the addendum provided some additional background including references to additional scientific papers and literature not cited in the original HRA.

¹ The submission version of the HRA (SUB4):
https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/6944/Habitat-Regulations-Assessment-2023/pdf/Habitat_Regulations_Assessment_Reg_19_73q1jupeggz4.pdf?m=1705169633093 and the submission version of the plan (SUB1)

<https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/21078/Publication-Draft-Local-Plan-2023-2040>

² Document AP3: https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/10101/Addendum-to-the-Habitats-Regulations-Assessment-of-the-South-Tyneside-Publication-Draft-Local-Plan-Regulation-19/pdf/Action_Point_3_S_Tyneside_HRA_Reg_19_ADDENDUM_021025.pdf?m=1760104689850

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- 1.7 Following the hearings, the Inspector made a number of recommendations for changes to the plan to ensure its soundness³. South Tyneside Council then prepared a schedule of Main Modifications, which is the subject of this HRA report.

Our approach in this addendum

- 1.8 An HRA follows specific steps. Firstly, it ‘screens’ the plan to identify if there is a risk that certain policies or allocations may have a ‘likely significant effect’ on a European site, alone or (if necessary) in-combination with other plans and projects. If the risk of likely significant effects can be ruled out, then the plan may be adopted but if they cannot, the plan must be subjected to the greater scrutiny of an ‘appropriate assessment’ to find out if the plan will have an ‘adverse effect on the integrity’ of the European sites. Following an appropriate assessment, a Plan may be adopted if an adverse effect on the integrity of the site can be ruled out.
- 1.9 This addendum should be read in conjunction with the submission version of the HRA (SUB4). That report sets out the legislative context, background and includes a complete screening of the Plan. Two particular issues were taken to appropriate assessment: impacts from increased recreation and impacts relating to hydrology. Following appropriate assessment, the HRA concluded that the South Tyneside Local Plan was in conformity with the Habitats Regulations, and at a plan level, a conclusion of no adverse effects, alone or in-combination, on European site integrity was drawn.
- 1.10 The MM result in a number of changes to the Plan. Most of these changes relate to changes in wording to add clarification, additional detail or change criteria in particular policies (as opposed to new allocations or marked changes in the quantum of growth proposed). It would therefore seem likely that the majority of the MM are unlikely to pose additional risks to European sites.
- 1.11 As such, our approach for this addendum is to update and build on the previous work by reviewing each MM and checking whether the MM has any implications for the conclusions made in the previous HRA.

³ For details see letter from the Inspector on 12th February 2026; INSP48 <https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/29442/Stage-two-post-hearings-letter-12-February-2026>

2. Screening of the MM for likely significant effects

- 2.1 This section documents the screening stage (stage 1 of the four stage HRA process). Each MM has been checked in light of the previous screening conclusion (set out in the submission HRA, SUB4) to review whether that conclusion would be any different with the MMs incorporated into the Plan.
- 2.2 A total of 54 MMs were individually checked with 105 changes. The majority had no implications whatsoever for the HRA. A total of 12 MMs were identified that did involve a change to allocations, changes to boundaries or similar, and these related to 8 different policies. The relevant MM and policies are listed in Table 1. The table shows the screening outcome in the submission HRA and the screening outcome incorporating the MM. None of the MM change the outcome of the screening in anyway, apart from MM-08 which relates to a new Policy, SP7a. This is for a strategic allocation of 400 homes. In the submission HRA this allocation was considered as part of policy SP7 and SP7 was screened in for likely significant effects. Potential risks were identified in relation to water issues in-combination (Durham Coast SAC, Northumbria Coast SAC/Ramsar) and for recreation in-combination (Durham Coast SAC, Northumbria Coast SAC/Ramsar). Following the MM, Policy SP7a now separates the allocation and the policy is now also screened in for the same risks.
- 2.3 Map 1 shows the allocations (incorporating the MMs) in relation to the various European sites. The Map updates Map 3 in the submission HRA.

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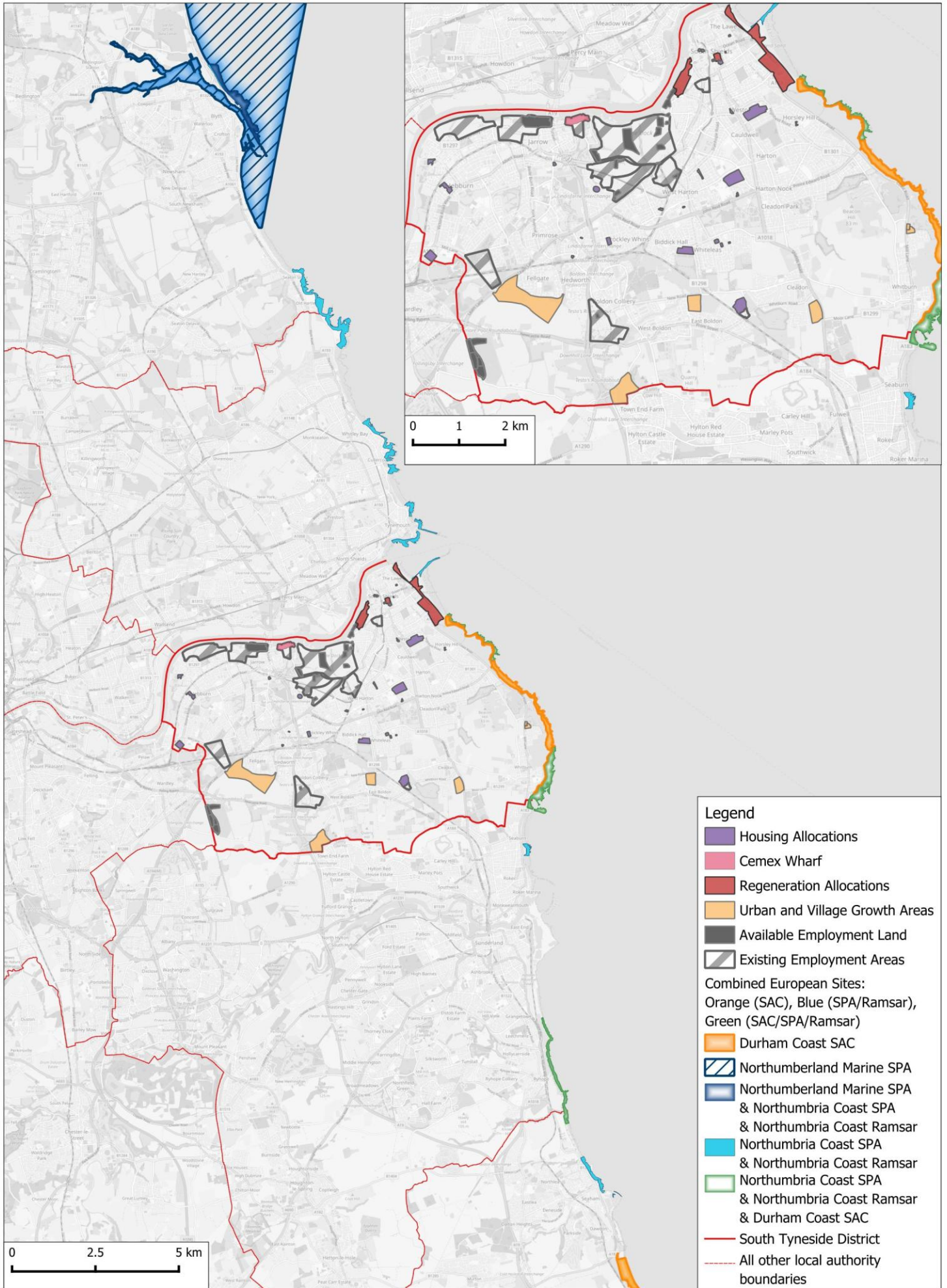
Table 1: Screening of the MM to check for changes to previous screening conclusions (i.e. changes to the screening in the submission version HRA). Only MMs where there are changes to allocations, modifications to boundaries or other change that might have any potential implication for the HRA are included in the table.

Policy	Reg 19 2024 Screening conclusion	MM	Summary of proposed change	Implications for HRA	Notes	Screening incorporating MM
SP2	Screened in	MM-01	Modification includes change in land area available for employment development	Change to employment allocations, possible implications for HRA.	Area now reduced.	Screened in, as submission HRA
SP4	Screened in	MM-04	Strategic allocation H7: Increase in capacity (163 to 260).	Changes to indicative housing capacity, possible implications for HRA.	SP4 now includes 26 (not 27) strategic sites and increases capacity by 70 homes	Screened in, as submission HRA
SP4	Screened in	MM-04	Strategic allocation H11: Site deleted as under construction.	Change to housing numbers, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP4	Screened in	MM-04	Strategic allocation H17: Site deleted as under construction.	Change to housing numbers, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP4	Screened in	MM-04	Strategic allocation H24: New site added with capacity for 202 homes.	Change to housing numbers, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP7	Screened in	MM-07	Strategic allocation GA3: Site deleted	Change to housing numbers, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP7a	N/A	MM-08	New policy SP7a: Strategic allocation of 400 homes.	Change to housing numbers, possible implications for HRA.	This is the GA3 site, now removed from SP7 main policy and now in stand-alone separate policy.	Screened in. Potential risks for water issues in-combination (Durham Coast SAC, Northumbria Coast SAC/Ramsar); Recreation in-combination (Durham Coast SAC, Northumbria Coast SAC/Ramsar).

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Policy	Reg 19 2024 Screening conclusion	MM	Summary of proposed change	Implications for HRA	Notes	Screening incorporating MM
SP12	Screened in	MM-14	Policy map amended	Boundary change, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP16	Screened in	MM-21	Policy text amended to phase housing and decrease numbers slightly.	Changes to housing numbers and phasing, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP17	Screened in	MM-29	Policy criteria (1) amended to increase provision of strategic employment land.	Increase in employment land, possible implications for HRA.		Screened in, as submission HRA
SP19	Screened out	MM-30	Table modified to reduce the land available.	Change in area of land for port and river-related development, area reduced.	Area now reduced	Screened out. No likely significant effect
SP19	Screened out	MM-31	Policy boundary / PR.1 site boundary modified.	Change of boundary based to reflect reduction in employment area, possible implication for HRA.		Screened out. No likely significant effect

Map 1: Allocations and European Sites within 20km of district boundary



3. Implications for appropriate assessment and the integrity test

- 3.1 Following the checks of each of the MM, it can be seen that the key change of any relevance to the screening is the allocation within the new policy SP7a. In the submission HRA this was assessed as part of policy SP7 and therefore the allocation itself was taken to appropriate assessment and fully assessed at submission. The change to the screening therefore has no implication for the appropriate assessment and the integrity test.
- 3.2 In the submission HRA (and water quality addendum, AP3) it was demonstrated that, given the distribution of development in the Plan, development could not lead to any further deterioration in water quality or supply on the Durham Coast SAC. As such, adverse effects were ruled out alone or in-combination. Similarly for the Northumbria Coast SPA/Ramsar water availability and water quality in relation to impacts from development are not a potential risk and adverse effects on integrity were ruled out, alone or in-combination.
- 3.3 The incorporation of the MM results in no change to this outcome. While the MM now result in an additional 70 dwellings in total allocated within the Plan and small changes to site boundaries, these cannot change the outcome of the previous HRA work in relation to water issues.
- 3.4 The submission HRA also identified impacts from increased recreation use, in the absence of mitigation, for the Durham Coast SAC and the Northumbria Coast SPA/Ramsar. The relatively small changes in the number of dwellings and boundaries have no implication for the scale of impact and level of mitigation required. Mitigation is delivered through a mitigation strategy which has been running since 2018 and is secured in policy within the Plan. The MM do not include any changes to the mitigation and will have no impact on the deliverability of the mitigation.
- 3.5 A draft of the mitigation strategy is part of the examination library (AP2⁴) and the strategy is flexible enough to accommodate the small additional housing numbers now included within the Plan at MM. With the strategy in place and

⁴ https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/9873/South-Tyneside-Recreation-Mitigation-Strategy-2025-to-2030/pdf/Action_Point_2.pdf?m=1756737076033

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delivering the necessary mitigation, adverse effects on integrity from recreation can be ruled out. Given the strategy dovetails with similar strategies running along the coast, the strategic mitigation means adverse effects on integrity can also be ruled out in-combination.

- 3.6 A statement of common ground with Natural England also forms part of the examination library (POSTSUB26⁵). Natural England are the statutory nature conservation body and must be consulted in relation to appropriate assessment. The statement of common ground confirms that Natural England agreed with the HRA conclusions at submission – in relation to water issues and in relation to recreation impacts. Given the MM result in only a slight change to the screening and no change to the appropriate assessment findings, the statement with Natural England's provides further reassurance that the Plan is in compliance with the Habitats Regulations.
- 3.7 With the recreation mitigation strategy in place and operational, it can be concluded therefore that the South Tyneside Local Plan is in conformity with the Habitats Regulations, and at a plan level a conclusion of no adverse effects, alone or in-combination, on European site integrity can be drawn.

⁵ https://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/media/9710/Statement-of-Common-Ground-between-South-Tyneside-Council-and-Natural-England-updated-2-July/pdf/SoCG_-_STC_and_Natural_England_updated_02_July_25_Final.pdf?m=1751627592803